

soul of a community, at its most sacred place. These fires bring terror and tears to communities that often have known all too much of both. And we are all diminished in spirit by the despicable doings of a hate-filled few.

Yet even from such a cowardly and vile act, great good has sprung. I note that upon the publicizing of these burnings, there has been an outpouring of support for the beleaguered congregations, both to fund the rebuilding of the churches and to assist in the apprehension of the perpetrators. Reconstruction of the churches has become a community affair, with volunteers from across the Nation.

Those who would burn a church should remember that to do so serves only to awaken a moral imperative to speak out and act against such violence. George Washington reflected the spirit of the Nation when he wrote in a letter to the congregation of Touro Synagogue of Newport, RI, that the Government of the United States "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." Today, 206 years later, Washington's words echo with renewed fervor across an outraged land.

THE DEATH OF LE MAI, VICE FOREIGN MINISTER OF VIETNAM

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I wish to note with regret the sudden death last week of Le Mai, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam. Le Mai hosted me for dinner just 3 weeks ago when I was in Hanoi. I found him to be warm, intelligent, and above all eager to continue the process of improving relations with the United States.

Mai's death comes at a particularly difficult time in Vietnamese politics. The Communist Party is scheduled to hold a crucial party congress at the end of this month, where several important decisions regarding the near future of the country will be made. Mai would have been a strong force pushing Vietnam toward a more open economic system. He told me in Hanoi that Vietnam's biggest mistake so far was imposing a demand economy. He argued that the laws of capitalism "just are" and that Vietnam has developed much since economic reforms were started in the late 1980's. He also would have been a strong force pushing his government toward more friendly relations with the West. He recognized that his country needed political, as well as economic reforms and said he wanted closer relations with the United States in part to help his fellow countrymen better understand our system.

Le Mai was one of the principle architects of the normalization process between the United States and Vietnam and his dedication to moving that relationship further forward was evident in our discussions. He stressed the need for the United States to have an active presence in Southeast Asia, economically, politically and even militarily. He understood the lingering problems that many in both countries

have with the bilateral relationship because of the war, but argued that it was important for governments to try to forge policies to get past people's emotions. He recognized, too, the responsibility that he and other leaders in both countries had in creating those policies, telling me that "our generation fought the war, so it is our duty to solve the problems" that resulted from it.

His death is a loss to his country and to the ongoing process of improving relations between our two countries.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator JOHNSTON, I request that a member of his staff, Comdr. Paul Gonzales, a congressional fellow, be allowed floor privileges for the duration of debate on the Defense authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to express my support for S. 1745, the Defense authorization bill for fiscal year 1997. The Armed Services Committee has done an outstanding job by bringing to the full Senate a bill that responsibly addresses this country's national security needs.

Fortunately, the end of the cold war has reduced the most immediate threat of nuclear war. And while it is natural to feel relief that the struggle against Soviet expansionism has been won, it would be naive and short-sighted to conclude that real threats to our Nation's security no longer exist. The end of the cold war has uncapped a host of long-simmering regional conflicts around the globe. Combined with the proliferation of nuclear and missile technology as well as chemical and biological weapons, these limited conflicts carry the potential for far wider consequences. We must recognize that the world is still a dangerous place and that maintaining an adequate level of military preparedness must continue to be a national priority.

The fact is that funding for national defense has been on a dangerous downward track for over a decade. Funding for national defense has fallen by 41 percent in real terms since 1985. The fiscal year 1997 defense budget will be at its lowest level since the Korean war buildup began in 1950.

Even more alarming is the fact that military procurement has dropped by

71 percent over the last 10 years. The practical result is that our service men and women are forced to use aging equipment which will increasingly impair military readiness. The defense budget submitted by President Clinton for fiscal year 1997 would unwisely continue this neglect of our military hardware and would—not for the first time, I might add—postpone spending for critical weapons modernization programs into the future.

The Armed Services Committee deserves credit for crafting a responsible bill that addresses the need for modernization and provides the necessary resources. The \$12.9 billion added by the committee to the administration's defense funding request is mainly for additional procurement items including one DDG-51 destroyer, four F-16 fighter planes, six F/A-18's, and one C-17 cargo transport. Nearly 30 percent of the \$12.9 billion added by the committee is for accelerated research and development for programs such as missile defense, the new attack submarine, and a new arsenal ship armed with cruise missiles. These add-ons reflect the concerns and priorities of the military services themselves.

While upgrading and modernizing military hardware deserves a high priority, so too does ensuring that our Armed Forces personnel receive the benefits they deserve. The best military equipment in the world is of little value without the highly trained and hard-working service men and women on whom our national defense depends. I am therefore pleased that the fiscal year 1997 Defense authorization bill authorizes a 3-percent military pay raise and a 4-percent increase in the basic allowance for quarters.

Overall, the committee proposes a reasonable level of defense spending in the coming fiscal year, one which I believe acknowledges that defense resources are not unlimited. The committee's recommendation of \$267.3 billion in defense spending for fiscal year 1997 is only \$2.1 billion above the fiscal year 1996 level in nominal terms. Adjusted for inflation, the committee's recommended defense authorization level is actually \$5.6 billion below the current level of defense spending in real terms.

Mr. President, the people of Maine support a strong national defense and they have always been ready to do their part. Maine's Bath Iron Works is one of two private U.S. shipyards that build the Arleigh Burke class destroyer for the Navy. I am pleased that the fiscal year 1997 Defense authorization bill authorizes \$3.4 billion for four destroyers in fiscal year 1997 plus \$750 million in advance procurement for one additional ship in fiscal year 1998. The advanced procurement for a fiscal year 1998 destroyer is crucial to implementing the Navy's acquisition plan of building three ships per year in each of the 4 years from fiscal year 1998 through fiscal year 2001. As a result of this orderly and efficient procurement

plan, the price per ship will drop significantly and the Navy will realize cost savings of \$1 billion over the 4-year period.

The bill also adds \$45.3 million to continue the Navy's current strength of 13 active and 9 reserve squadrons of P-3 patrol aircraft. Four active and three reserve P-3 squadrons are based at Maine's Brunswick Naval Air Station, the only active military airfield in New England. These squadrons play an important role in antisubmarine warfare in the North Atlantic sealanes and in the Navy's littoral warfare mission in Europe and the Mediterranean region. One of the active P-3 squadrons based at Brunswick Naval Air Station in Maine is targeted for decommissioning for budgetary reasons, not because there has been any change in the Navy's mission. The funds authorized in this bill will ensure that Brunswick NAS will maintain its current level of four active P-3 squadrons.

Mr. President, S. 1745 embodies a well-balanced approach to our national defense in fiscal year 1997. It preserves our readiness to meet military emergencies, it emphasizes modernization and new weapons procurement, it continues research and development of promising new technologies, and it treats our military personnel fairly. Again, I congratulate the Armed Services Committee on their work, and I urge that the bill be adopted.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MILITARY NOMINATIONS

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I know the Senator from South Carolina has been working diligently, and he called a hearing. We have a number of very important military nominations out of our committee. They are now pending on the calendar. I know he has also followed that and has been working diligently to try to get all of these nominations approved by the end of business this evening, or certainly by tomorrow.

I both thank him for that, and I emphasize to all of our colleagues how important it is. Many of these positions need to be filled now. We have had these nominations before us for the appropriate time. We have looked into them on the committee. They are very top officials that will be going to various and important positions all over the world.

We have General Kadish, U.S. Air Force, who is one of these.

We have General Kross. General Kross will be going to TRANSCOM.

We have a number of Army nominations.

We have General Tilelli, to be the top military official in a very, very impor-

tant and volatile part of the world, Korea. He wears two hats, both in U.S. Army and the U.N. Command.

We have General Wesley Clark in the SOUTHCOM position—enormously important.

We have a number of U.S. Army Reserve officers: General Bergson, General Caton, General Kropp, General O'Connell, Colonel Deloatch, to be major generals; Colonel Diamond, to be brigadier general; Colonel Gilley, Colonel Gilliam, Colonel Roan, Colonel Rossi, and Colonel Simmons, to be brigadier generals.

We have Lt. Gen. David Bramlett going to FORCEM, another very important position, commanding all of our Army forces in the United States.

We have General Schoomaker.

We have a number of Marine Corps generals:

Brigadier General Braaten; Brigadier General DeLong; Brigadier General Hanlon; Brigadier General Higginbotham; Brigadier General Karamarkovich; Brig. Gen. Jack Klimp;

Maj. Gen. Carol Mutter, she will become the head of manpower in the Marines Corps. She will also become the highest ranking female to serve not only in the Marine Corps but also in the history of our military. I have met her, have talked to her, and have followed her career—an enormously important general.

I will not name all of these, but I guess the first thing I would like to say to my chairman, Senator THURMOND, is that I appreciate his diligence in trying to get these nominations through, and I hope that we will be able to get all of them through this evening.

I certainly urge my colleagues who may have questions about any of the nominees or have any concerns about the nominees, to basically come to the floor and let us know and state their concerns, and let us see if we cannot follow them and get all of these nominations through.

I think it is important for them to go through. I believe, if any of them do not go through, that it is very important for the leadership of the Senate to schedule a debate and let us debate them. If there are any concerns about any of them, I think we ought to debate it, get the concern out on the floor and have the Senate vote on it.

That would be my hope. I believe the Senator from South Carolina will share that hope.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, these nominations have been before us for quite a time. They all meet the requirements. They should be approved. They are needed in their respective services. I hope that we could get those up as quickly as possible and get them approved.

There is one that is being objected to by a Senator. Maybe we can act on the rest of them. I would like to see all of them acted on, including that one. But maybe we can act on the rest of them so they can go about performing their duties.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, there was a unanimous-consent request that was submitted today asking that all amendments be filed today or not be in order. That unanimous-consent request was not agreed to. It is my strong hope, though, that we will be able to have that kind of unanimous-consent request agreed to early next week.

I serve notice on our side of the aisle that we would like all amendments filed by 4 o'clock next Tuesday afternoon. I have talked to the chairman about this. I have talked to the majority leader, Senator LOTT, about this. It is certainly my intention to do everything possible to get that kind of unanimous-consent agreement early next week.

So I serve notice today to all our colleagues, particularly those on the Democratic side of the aisle, from my perspective, that I will do everything in my power to help Senator THURMOND, and the leaders on both sides of the aisle, in their efforts to move this bill next week. The way to do that is to have all amendments that are going to be considered on this bill in by Tuesday at 4 o'clock.

It is my understanding that the majority leader would like to pass this bill next week, as well as the Defense appropriations bill. We have gotten bogged down on nongermane amendments now. It is my hope we can get back on Defense amendments, stick to those and get this bill done next week.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, there is no more important legislation before this Congress than to get this Defense authorization bill passed. We have been pleading with the Members to come in with their amendments. They have been delayed, delayed. Now the time has come to act.

We ask everyone who has an amendment to come forward and present their amendment by Tuesday at 4 o'clock. We are going to begin acting. We would like to have the amendments all in at that time. I urge all of the Members to do that, especially those on the Republican side. Senator NUNN has spoken about the Democratic side. He and I are working together. We are working together for the good of the country with this bill. It is nonpartisan.